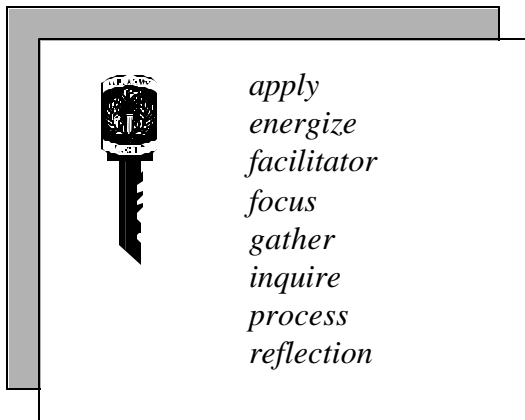


LESSON 2: USING AND DEVELOPING LESSON PLANS



INTRODUCTION

During your life, both in school and out, you may be called upon to instruct others about something on which you are an expert. It is important to know how to plan and execute a lesson.

Lesson plans are essential tools used for teaching. Teachers use a lesson plan like an outline to organize their thoughts and the information they plan to present to a class. This organization helps to create a degree of standardization in the presentation of learning objectives by instructors around the world. Consequently, a standardized lesson plan would show these teachers:

- What material they should teach
- To what extent they should teach the material
- In what sequence they should teach the material.

As a result, different teachers using the same lesson plan teach the same learning objectives and conduct the class in similar ways.

THE FOUR-PHASE LESSON PLAN

Some lesson plans consist of four phases:

- Inquire
- Gather
- Process
- Apply

INQUIRE PHASE

The purpose of the **Inquire** Phase is to determine the lesson's starting point. As a teacher, you need to determine what students already know or don't know about the lesson content. Knowing the answers to the following questions will help both you and your students understand their current level of knowledge.

- What do students know?
- What don't they know?
- What do students misunderstand?
- What are their past experiences?
- What do students want to know?
- What is the purpose of the lesson?
- How motivated are the students to learn the content?
- What are some practical reasons for students to participate in the lesson?

During this phase, you may wish to use an icebreaker or energizer in your lesson. These are physically active games or other activities that increase group interaction, promote a sense of team, generate laughter and a sense of fun, and introduce the concept or lesson objectives.

GATHER PHASE

Once you determine the lesson's starting point, you are ready to help your students gather information about what they need to know about the subject matter. You want to be able to provide the students with the important facts and concepts so they may have a better understanding and/or improve their skills.

The purpose of **Gather** Phase is to research and collect information from a variety of sources, to synthesize information, to evaluate existing information, to collect data, to evaluate ideas, or to observe new skills. Some important questions you can ask during this phase are:

- What new and essential information or new concepts did the students find?
- What are some new, critical skills?
- What connections or associations can be made?
- What can students do to make sense of the new information?
- What is the best way to gather the information?
- What new understandings can students construct?

PROCESS PHASE

The third phase is called the **Process** Phase. The purpose of this phase is to use the new information, practice new skills, and engage in different activities. The following questions can help you and your students.

- What can students do with the information?
- How can students demonstrate their understanding?

- What ways can students show relationships among the data or concepts?
- How can students practice and improve their skill(s)?
- What can students do to reinforce their understanding of the new concept?
- How can students ensure the new information is stored in long-term memory?

APPLY PHASE

The purpose of the **Apply** Phase is to help students make real-life applications of the new information or ideas. Students can also consider ways to integrate the lesson concepts or skills with other curriculum areas. They also plan ways to transfer their learning into personal use outside the classroom. Questions that can help both the instructor and students during this phase are:

- What else can be done with the information?
- What else is needed to make the information usable?

THE THREE COMPONENTS OF EACH PHASE

There are three components that are common to each of the four phases in the lesson plan. They are Direct Student Focus, Learning Activity, and Reflection.

DIRECT STUDENT FOCUS

As a teacher, you have a responsibility to help your students **focus** on specific elements of the learning activity. You will guide their thought processes and help them focus on key processes or content during the learning activity. You will eliminate or filter extraneous information so students can direct

their attention to what is critical for their learning.

For example, if the students watch a video, you will identify specific elements of the video on which to focus; if you have the students read a chapter in a book, you should list the details you expect them to extract from their reading; if the students do research on the web, you can help clarify the research topics or important information needed from the research; etc.

LEARNING ACTIVITY

Learning activities may appear in many guises. As a teacher, you should plan activities that best present the information and allow students the opportunity to participate in the learning process.

If you are in the role of teacher, have students engage in active learning experiences that assess their current level of understanding of the lesson content, their level of interest in the lesson, and their goals for their own learning. Appropriate Inquire Phase activities include:

- Agree/disagree worksheets
- K-W-L charts
- Analogies or metaphors
- Pre-quizzes or pre-tests
- ‘Group’ graph or ‘4-corners’
- Panel discussions
- Debates
- Homework reviews
- Other

Appropriate Gather Phase activities include:

- Graphic organizers
- Computer searches

- Jigsaw
- Interviewing experts
- Demonstrations
- Generating examples
- Socratic questioning
- Constructivist questions
- Other

Transference of information occurs during the learning activity. The student obtains information from you and fellow classmates and interacts with the new material. Practicing new skills helps the student evaluate the importance and usefulness of the information and understand how it connects to other things they know. Students also have an opportunity to demonstrate their grasp of the lesson material. Appropriate Process Phase activities include:

- Games
- Laboratory experiments
- Role play
- Peer teaching
- Rehearsal
- Simulations
- Reciprocal teaching
- Graphic organizer
- Other

As the **facilitator**, you disseminate information, direct student activities, observe performance, and answer student questions.

Have students engage in active learning experiences that help them transfer the new information or skills outside the classroom. Ask students to consider ways that the new information can be applied to their everyday lives and how it connects to what they are

learning in other classrooms. They can research the effectiveness of the new information or skills and evaluate their usefulness. Appropriate Apply Phase activities include:

- Action research
- Field trips
- Interviews
- Portfolios
- Student-designed homework activities
- Personal goals and objectives
- Creative connections
- Problem-based projects
- Other

REFLECTION

As the teacher, ask questions that help students think about, reflect on, or make sense of their learning experiences. Having students discuss or write down what they understand, helps them clarify their thinking and improve their understanding, as well as strengthen their memory connections. It is during this **reflection** process that students begin to understand the importance and purpose of the learning activity. Reflecting also helps the brain store the information into long-term memory.

CONCLUSION

For teachers, lesson plans are the building blocks used to help organize thoughts and information. The Four-Phase Lesson Plan was devised to facilitate the planning process. As you develop each phase of your lesson plan, remember to include the following components: Direct Student Focus, Learning Activity, and Reflection. If you are called upon to instruct others, your audience will benefit from this well-organized approach.